

# The Man Christ Jesus

A MEDITATION ON HIS  
LIFE AND DEATH

*and*

## Seven Distinct Titles of Christ in the Fourth Gospel

A STUDY  
OF HIS ABIDING SUFFICIENCY

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## FOREWORD

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*These simple papers of meditation and study have been written with the desire that Christian readers might be led to a refreshing contemplation of the uniqueness and abiding sufficiency of Jesus, the Son of God.*

*It is surely the truth of His person, work and glorification which embodies the full revelation of the infinite God to man.*

*If these papers so serve the Christian heart and mind that to them the Lord Jesus brought into clearer relief, leading to a brighter spiritual vision, the writer's purpose will have been accomplished.*

JOHN BLOORE.

*Plainfield, January, 1927.*

# **The Man Christ Jesus**

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## **A Meditation on His Life and Death**

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### **I.**

IT is with deepest reverence and a spirit of worship that we would meditate upon events of the greatest moment, enacted in a very brief space of time. They are the climax of preceding ages, during which the voice of patriarchs, prophets, priests and kings gave utterance as to the Coming One, in and with whom every desire, every exalted aspiration, every spiritual ideal and blessing are to be realized. The ages which have traced their course on the dial of time, with those which make up that illimitable time called "the age of ages," will ever look back upon those events as perfect manifestations of God, and the outshining of Light, which God is, unveiling the future as it lightens all the past.

The annals of this world's history tell of many who, through toil and anguish, have reached the goal of their hopes and have been

crowned with the accomplishment of their purpose; but of how many more who have suffered loss, whose tears, and mayhap their blood, have bedewed this sin-cursed earth, and none have cared, although all has spoken in the ear of Him who knows no indifference. He is the Man of our vision, who has suffered and died. He has been crowned too; but let us think of Him now as the One in whom the dignity of manhood found complete expression — unique in His being and life, unique in His sufferings and glory.

How did this Man make His appearance? Surely, if in Him the hopes of the world were to reach maturity, yea, the destiny of the universe itself be accomplished through Him, His introduction to the scene of action must have been in consonance with His character. Indeed, His whole path from birth to the great climax of His closing earthly days must be of a nature befitting His person, His mission, and His future plan.

All through the ages preceding His advent, angels and prophets had pondered over, and longed for a deeper knowledge of those sufferings and glories spoken of by the Spirit (1 Pet. 1: 10-12). They saw, cast upon the screen of human history, a shadow deeper than all others, and a light of glory brighter by far

than any other. These sufferings and glories always seemed to appear together with no gradual merging of the one into the other, but the brightness of the glory touched, yea, seemed to arise from the very darkness of the shadow. Their eyes scanned the distant horizon of the ages and discerned the outlines of a valley of suffering deeper than any other suffering, while out of it rose a mountain of glory such as human history could not show. Often, in prophetic utterances, they spoke of the glory, and dwelt with delight upon the blessing of all creation when brought into it, but never spake of the sufferings without connecting the glory with them. The very earliest intimation of the Coming One shows this linking of them together—the Seed of the woman, His heel bruised, but He the bruiser of the enemy's head. Who can read the wonderful history of Joseph and not see how the sufferings and the glory are side by side? We see it also in David's history, but it stands out most clearly in prophetic utterances throughout the Old Testament, as in Psalms 22; 102; Isaiah 53, etc.

Then the music of prophecy in which the deepest minor key passed into the highest major strain, trailed off into utter silence. No voice then gave any further intimation, or assurance, that these things would be accom-

plished. Centuries passed and the world reeled on in its course until it seemed as though the visions of the prophets must fail and all crumble under the blight of sin.

Suddenly the long silence was broken by the voice of a lone man in hermit garb—a voice which made the wilderness echo with its stern cry, yet glowing promise. A voice, not of one clothed in soft raiment and frequenting kings' palaces, but a voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make His paths straight" — a voice bringing down the mountain of man's pretensions to the level of the plain, and exalting the valley of humility, that a highway for the Lord our God might be made. He called to repentance; he called men to humble themselves to the very dust, even to death, in view of the Coming One—Emmanuel, God with us.

Then, HE came; but in such a form that as He stood among men, they took no knowledge of Him. Outwardly He seemed like one of themselves, yet such was His glory that His herald proclaimed himself unworthy to do the most menial service for Him. Even John would not have known Him as different from other men, as far as the form upon which the eye could look, except that to him it had been divinely revealed how He should be marked out

in a special way; so truly a man was He, yet the Son of God—the promised One—the Bruiser of the Serpent's head—Emmanuel!

The words of that voice reached to remote lands, for men came from every quarter to Jerusalem. They would carry with them on their homeward journey the news of such an announcement as John's, for it was shaking the whole fabric of the Jewish religious state, awakening on every side the conscience and heart of the people and making the wings of hope spread out again. How heart-thrilling and awe-inspiring the announcement: The Coming One was Jehovah, coming among them as a man! Transcendent Mystery!—in the presence of which all must be silent in profound worship. Then look! He comes.

A great company is gathered on the banks of Jordan, the River of Death. He whose voice has broken the long prophetic silence is standing in the water fulfilling his baptismal mission. There moves in among the crowd a Man of whom no special notice is taken, so like all those around Him He appears to be. Men are confessing their sins, and being baptized unto repentance. He passes along with those who move toward the Baptist and in turn He comes to him. A few words pass between them as they stand together. A hesitation, peculiar to

no other case, marks the attitude of the Baptizer as he looks upon the One before him. Whatever he did not know, he did know that this One needed no repentance, that He was perfectly holy. Why, then, should He be baptized? But His request prevails, and the Baptist takes Him into his arms and puts Him 'neath the water.

Who can tell the mingled feelings that surged through the prophet's breast as he put *that* Man under those waters? John had leaped in his mother's womb at the sound of the voice of this Man's mother—the mother of his Lord. Perhaps John may have learnt to know Him in His years of seclusion as One so different from all others, who grew in favor with God and man—spotless in life, holy and loving. From Him no ill-spoken word, no empty jest was ever breathed; no sinfully suggestive word uttered. By reason of His moral perfectness His tender heart and spirit suffered from the conditions which pressed in from all around. Yet He comes with sin-confessors to be baptized! Small wonder there should be hesitation on the part of the prophet. Yet His gentle and compelling insistence constrains to the performance of the act. Again, I remark, how deep and mingled must have been John's feelings as he let Him down under those waters!



Coming up from the water Jesus bowed in prayer (Luke 3:21), and ere the silence could be broken by human voice, another Voice must speak. The blue vault of heaven is opened to the amazed and awe-struck throng, and a Voice from out of its chambers gave utterance to the most marvelous announcement ever heard by human ears: "*This*"—this Man just lifted from beneath the waters where the multitude had been baptized confessing thier sins—"*This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*" Before the eyes of all He is marked out as the One upon whom the Spirit of God abides in all the fulness and glory of His heavenly character. Now John knows Him as the One who would baptize with the Holy Ghost, and he "saw and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:32-34). What a record he must have borne in that inspiring hour before the assembled throng! He then had reached the high point of his mission as he presented to them the One whom he had already announced as coming to baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. And now, in the presence of Jehovah standing among men, he, the herald and preparer of His way, must necessarily decrease, as he himself declares, while this One must increase and be preferred before him, for He was before him (John 3:27-31).

What a culmination to the voice that was heard calling men to repentance, levelling all men to the lowest place—baptizing them in the Jordan! As a result of its message men's hearts had been stirred, and a bright expectation had begun to light up the gloom that had gathered during the centuries since the last prophet had spoken. Now in as sudden a manner as the Voice had sounded in the wilderness solitude, this noontide glory was displayed and *Jehovah was found among men*, in a new and infinitely fuller way making good what He said to the bondslaves of Egypt, "I am come down to deliver;" but not now simply a nation of slaves, but a world of sinners—to be "The Saviour of the world!" Behold the Man! He is introduced upon the highway prepared for Him.

But what is the meaning of His initial act? Who cannot see in it His pledge of association with the poor sinful children of men in all their need, and the suffering that this will entail for Him?—while in that outbreak of heavenly delight we see the forecast of His glory.

If we go back to a still earlier moment we see this same thing. Over the Babe in the manger, for whom there was found no room in the inn, heaven's choir chanted its blessed anthem. Again the intimation of His sufferings and glory are brought together by the Spirit when,

just after His own announcement of His sufferings and death, it is followed by the account of His transfiguration on the Holy Mount—a sweet and blessed presage of His glory, no doubt, to His own sorrowing heart.

Again, at a later time, Greeks desired to see Him, and speaking under the pressure of His troubled spirit of that dreadful hour in which His sufferings were to culminate, the Voice from the excellent glory immediately gave its assurance of the end to be attained.

When He walked with two of His disciples after all had been accomplished, He said, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and enter into His glory?” and beginning at Moses He shed divine light upon the Holy Scriptures, showing how all had been fulfilled in Him. No wonder their hearts burned as He talked to them by the way. May we hear His voice speaking to *us* as we meditate upon the gracious yet stormy days of His earthly life.

## II.

THE crowd that had witnessed the wonderful scene on Jordan’s bank when Jesus was baptized, must have been filled with wonder and expectation as they slowly dispersed. Jesus

too passed on, it would seem as little noticed as when at first He moved among the people who, doubtless, spread the news of what they had seen and heard.

Let us follow Him. Acknowledged from heaven as God's beloved Son, borne witness to by His herald, the Baptizer, Jesus now passes along no easy or well-beaten track. Alone He moves into the solitude of the wilderness to enter into suffering and conflict—alone in the world He had made, He must do battle with man's great enemy. He entered the field of combat with no human companion, no human voice to cheer or encourage. His tears may have moistened the barren waste, for did He not bear in His heart the pain of what sin had brought into this scene? The wild beasts were with Him, and stilled into passivity as He moved among them, seemingly responding to the sweet constraint of His presence—the presence of Him who gave them breath and food in season. He fed *them*, Himself He would not feed, but fasted forty days and forty nights—all the time that He was tempted of Satan. There was no hand to minister to Him, neither human nor divine. Not until the conflict was over, and the battle won, did the angels come and minister to Him.

Here again the sufferings are followed with

the intimation of the coming glory. What a sense of pain and rejection the barren, silent wilderness must have induced, with Satan's bitter taunts still heard as he beats his retreat from the presence of the lone Victor! Suddenly it is lit with the glory of heavenly visitants that humbly minister to Him. It must have spoken to His burdened heart of the glory of a coming day when, in service upon the Son of Man, the angels of heaven should ascend and descend in His kingdom and glory (John 1: 47-51). Then would be accomplished all that of which His present victory was the prophecy, even the complete breaking of Satan's power in the wilderness-world, which its rightful Owner will cause to bud and blossom as a garden of delight.

Here, then, by anticipation, we see the deep shadows mingle with the bright rays of glory. This forms a suited opening to His path of public service — the service of Him about whose person and work are centered every hope, and in whom alone their fulfilment is to be found. He had to meet the evil genius who has cast an awful shadow over the fair face of creation. The usurper must be overcome that his house may be entered and his goods spoiled; so the Lord Jesus was manifested that the works of the devil might be destroyed (1 John 3: 8). He

came into the world for the accomplishment of this plan, and we see the scroll of divine purpose beginning to unroll in the temptation-scene from which He emerges in full triumph to carry forward His work of conquest over the enemy's power (Luke 4:14).

There quickly follows that which presages the character of His path through this world. The people that hear Him are compelled to bear witness to and wonder at His gracious words; yet, when pricked in their consciences by His faithfulness, they rise in anger and seek to kill Him. His love, grace and faithfulness are requited with hatred, scorn and murderous intent. Who can tell how deep the suffering of His holy soul, and the sorrow of His tender heart as He passed along His way! He met the sick and afflicted with His healing touch or word of power; to the spiritually famished multitude He unceasingly gave the Word of God, and when they hungered He gave them bread. In His presence death passed into the bloom of life. He removed the blight of sin as He moved among men. He met the cavils of unbelief and religious hate with the quiet dignity and power of truth which silenced the adversary; heart-broken by reproach, He wept over the callous indifference which pressed upon Him from every side. How insensible all

were to Him! Man in whom He found His delights found none in Him! He was like a pelican of the wilderness, an owl of the desert, and a sparrow alone upon the housetop, while His enemies reproached Him all the day.

But what lowly grace and self-abasing love characterized Him in all these circumstances! He could think of the weariness of His disciples and call them apart to rest awhile; the sight of the shepherdless multitudes draws out His compassion, and He must go forth from the desired solitude to meet their need. He came to seek and to save, and if in some little measure He is the sought One, His heart goes in all its love to meet the need. He grew weary too, yet spared not Himself. Miracle of love was that suffering life of the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief — that is what it meant for Him to be the Seeker.

When we meditate a little upon it, what a pathetic word, "He came to seek!" He who should have been welcomed with love's warm embrace is a stranger among His own! Utter insensibility was shown Him by those He had come to seek. It was suffering for Him to be the Seeker, though love impelled Him to it.

In Eden He had been a Seeker, when man shrank back into the shadow that the knowledge of his sin made him desire. Now Jehovah stood

among them, and could be seen and heard and handled; but after four thousand years of sin and rebellion man had become bold in effrontery. At one time they sought to take Him by force to do *their* will, at one time to be their king, at another to take His life. He wrought in power to meet men's need, but the mass did not care; only a few were knit to Him. To seek man under such circumstances was suffering indeed.

He came not only to seek, but also to *save*. In this, His deeper sufferings are to be traced. It was one thing to seek, quite another as having found the lost, to accomplish the work of salvation. A rough and thorny road the Seeker traveled, but to save sinners meant the accomplishment of a work under the strokes of Justice and the hiding of God's face, through the deepest kind of suffering, under the throes of judgment and wrath-bearing!

He came into the world to save sinners. It was the purpose before Him to which His love mightily impelled. No other ever came into the world for the accomplishment of such an end. Of no other have such words ever been truly uttered or written. Men look upon the so-called great founders of religions and acclaim them as the beacons of hope to the world, lighting the way to moral and spiritual achievement.



They even place the Lord Jesus in this class, and grant Him chief place in the great religious procession. With them Christ is one of the stepping-stones of man's moral and spiritual development toward that illusive goal, "Ye shall be as God." Did Buddha, Confucius or Mohammed *come* into the world to save sinners? Shapen in iniquity, sinners by nature and practice, who would dare to say of them, any more than of any of us, "They came into the world to save sinners?" Whatever religious plan or maxims they may have had in their mature years, will any one say that they "*came* into the world" with that plan or purpose for the guidance of their fellow-creatures and ultimate salvation? Whence did they come? Were they not of sinful man's generation? How essential to the whole truth of redemption is the virgin birth, the incarnation of the *Son of God!* It was because of His existence from eternity, and as born of the Holy Spirit by the virgin Mary that it can be said, "He *came* into the world" for the glorious accomplishment of salvation—not to have developed in Him after His birth the purpose and plan to save sinners, but came according to the eternal purpose. He was the Lamb "foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. 1: 20), the chosen "Captain of salvation" to "bring many sons to

glory" (Heb. 2:10). And He who thus came was the Creator Himself, the One "by whom and for whom all things were made," who "upheld all by the word of His power" (Col. 1:14-23). The great features of His coming are brought together in the following scripture:

*"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, becoming in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross" (New Trans.).*

### III.

OUR Lord's life here was one of power in ministering to the bodies and souls of those among whom He moved, yet never exercised on His own behalf, no matter how threatening the storm that might gather round Him. There was righteousness and holiness blended with tender compassion and love, each finding expression at the suited time and season. He moved among men with calm, unruffled mien,

and taught with an authority which amazed them. The very elements were obedient to His word. "Never man spake like this Man," was the report of His adversaries. Disease and death passed away at His word or touch; sightless eyes were opened, the lame made to leap, lepers were cleansed and restored to their home, and the Word of God was preached to the multitudes. The physical ailments with their spiritual counterparts found blessed delivering power at His word. He, Himself, has given an epitome of what His life and service among men would mean:

**"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He anointed Me to preach  
good tidings to the poor:  
He hath sent Me to proclaim release  
to the captives;  
And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty them that are bruised,  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."**

He was "the image of the invisible God"—the perfect portrayal of the character and mind of God. The full expression of the Godhead was given in Him, and men saw and hated both Him and His Father. They loved the darkness rather than the light, so that He, the Creator, was among them a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." God was in Christ seek-

ing by His life and service among men to reconcile them to Himself. Yet such was the power of darkness—the power of Satan over man—that it drew forth their hatred, not their love. Awful testimony to their alienation from the life of God! It was the conclusive proof that only a deeper form of service, wrought through death instead of life, could effectually meet the desperate need of the deceived and alienated creature under sin. Thus alone could His fore-announced mission be accomplished to the glory of God and blessing of men. His life and service among men were the demonstration that in His person the kingdom of God had come among them, for the works of God were by Him wrought in the power of the Holy Spirit. He triumphed over “the strong man” and “spoiled his goods” as He passed along His way through a scene full of all that was adverse to Himself.

Withal He was not an ascetic. He did not hide Himself from men. He would respond to the invitation to a wedding; or, when asked, dine with self-righteous Pharisees; and how much more with the poor publicans and sinners who better knew how to appreciate His grace! He could with delight take His seat in the home circle at Bethany, a sweet and sacred resting-place for His sorrow-pressed heart. He

knew the mothers' hearts and could enter into their feeling for their children and take the little ones into His arms and bless them. He knew the anguish which pierced a widow's soul when the son of her hope was being carried to the grave, and in deepest sympathy met her need. He knew the aching of a father's heart as his beloved one lay sick, near to death, and how he would go anywhere or try anything that held promise of keeping the cherished object of his love. He knew the wearying anxious care that was brought by a wayward son, and none knew better than He the gladness and joy which filled the father's heart and house when the lost one was found. He knew the care and work connected with house and home, as we may glean from His remark to Martha, and He showed how amid it all, He valued that kindredness of spirit found in a Mary sitting at His feet. He was sensitive, too, to the discourtesy and rudeness of adversaries, but He made even these occasions for appeal to the heart, and not for unkind words. And so when that which should have been done for Him as a guest is denied, He does not murmur nor complain, but when the lack is supplied by a poor broken-hearted sinner who casts herself down at His feet, He can through her make an appeal to His thoughtless host.

## IV.

THE sorrows of Gethsemane mark with peculiar sacredness the closing scenes of that wondrous life and service. The traitor's kiss, the mock trials before the Jewish and Roman Courts, the outburst of human hatred against the perfect good as well as the perfect love which found their embodiment in Him, are the dark shadows of the closing day. The anticipation of it gripped His holy soul, making Him feel as never before the want of human fellowship and sympathy which even marked His own disciples. He was passing into the realm of a deep unfathomable sorrow. Perfect Man, that He was, He desired human fellowship as far as such companionship could go, well knowing that they could stand with Him only at the entrance, and that He must then proceed alone until the very end is reached. Then, far deeper than all, the shadow of the cross and forsaking of God caused His sweat to become as blood.

In their venomous hatred, His persecutors would have laid their hands upon Him on more than one occasion, but "His hour was not yet come" (John 7:30; 8:20). Their hatred surged against bounds impossible to pass, until that predestined hour arrived for the meeting of

which He had indeed come into the world (John 12:27). It would be an hour of scattering; He well knew His own familiar friend would lift up his heel against Him. Even that little band which had companied with Him would flee and leave Him alone, yet, as He says, not alone, for the Father would be with Him (John 16:32). But how His tender human heart with all its deep affection and devotion to its objects felt this loneliness! No human comforter, none to take pity, yea, He looked for some but found none. The raving mob of His enemies thirsting for His blood, the object of their scorn, as with ravenous eyes and gaping mouth they looked upon this Man who, calm and unmoved, made no plea for Himself, made no effort to prevent their having their own way and doing as their hearts listed. Ah! they had Him now, and would make a sure end! If never before, it was their hour now. Their murderous hearts gloated over the approaching triumph. They would show that He could not escape them, and that they would put an end to this disturber who had shaken their prestige over the multitude, even in Jerusalem, not by the martial tread of soldiery but by His words. They would show that it was nothing; and their hearts rejoiced that now at last, they had Him!

Oh, the blindness and the hate of the human heart away from God! He had drawn near, and the hideousness of man's hatred breaks out against Him. It reaches its culmination in the closing hours of His deep, unmeasured sorrow. Blessed, holy Sufferer! Yet the city which rang with the cry for Thy blood shall echo and echo again with the joyous acclaim of Thy glory and Kingship. Hasten that day!

Let us dwell a little upon the features of these closing scenes, potential with the shadow of coming events. They open with the preparation for the Passover. It is said then, "that His hour was come" (John 13:1), and knowing this, it was His expressed desire to eat the Passover with His disciples before He suffered (Lk. 22:15). The guest-chamber was found, all was made ready, so that when the hour was come He sat down and the twelve with Him. Who can set forth the thoughts that filled His heart as thus He took His place among His loved ones? It was the hour of transition, closing up the past ages and leading to the opening up of new and wondrous things. An hour at the beginning of which prophetic types still spoke, but at the close of which they were passing away into the fulfilment of all to which they bore witness. These things must have been in His mind. He knew that His de-



parture was near, and He knew just how He would depart, but He knew also that all things were in His hands and that He went to God from whom He had indeed come (John 13: 1-3). The suffering and the glory were all vividly before His soul in these closing scenes preceding the great consummation.

The thought of the Passover is first. Soon the glorious accomplishment of its great typical teaching would be enacted upon Calvary's hill, where "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5: 7). They gather in the guest-chamber to eat this feast. What a flood of thoughts must have filled their hearts and minds as the events connected with it passed before their memory, of that dark night in Egypt; the judgment-angel; the bitter cry heard on every hand; the poured-out blood from the slain lamb which had yielded its life to provide safety for them from the sword of the destroyer; the deliverance effected and the enrichment of the emancipated people—how all this must have been before them; and *He* knew that all must be fulfilled. He supped with His own while a mingled flood of sorrow and joy filled His soul to which the disciples were so little sensible.

It is at such a time that He rises from the table, girds Himself as a servant, to wash His

disciples' feet. Significant and beautiful action, and at such a season! Its meaning, which they understood not then, but which we now may well understand, is treasured in that brief word, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part *with Me*"—a type of "the washing with water by the Word" that they and we might enter into what is our part with Him. Beautiful that these two things should come together at this season—the blood of sacrifice (by which is provided God's shelter from the judgment our sins deserve, as typified in the Passover) and the water of cleansing by which sanctification of life is effected through the purifying power of the Word of God, as used by the Holy Spirit.

A third, and still more significant, action takes place at this time—the institution of the memorial of the bread and wine, the emblems of His body and blood given as a ransom for others, even for us. We can scarcely fail to see the link between the Passover and this memorial supper. He was to be their Passover—ours too if we believe it—both the *food of life* upon which the redeemed should feed, and the means of *preserving life* from all possible judgment. But this carries with it that deep and precious personal element so heart-winning and praise-filling which no other observance of any kind possesses. It breathes upon

us the love of Christ—He gave *Himself*—for us!

“It passeth knowledge, that dear love of Thine,  
My Jesus, Saviour! yet this soul of mine  
Would of Thy love, in all its breadth and length,  
Its height and depth and everlasting strength,  
Know more and more.”

His body given, His blood shed, all for us, so that the believer may gladly and boldly say, adopting the language of Scripture, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2: 20). He gave Himself for my sins (Gal. 1: 4). He bore my “sins in His body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2: 24).

“Love divine, all praise excelling,  
Joy of heaven, to earth come down!”

There is a depth of meaning in the words He uttered on this occasion; words borne down through the ages, the chime of which sound with infinite love in the believing hearts of those who gather according to His desire, responding to the request of His love, “*This do in remembrance of Me.*”

The dark figure of the betrayer casts a sinister shadow upon the scene; his heart filled with the darkness of the pit, his soul ensnared in the meshes of Satan’s power, yet surrounded with every token of affection that Divine love could show and with the appeal of that love made to him in the sweetest way. In the midst of all

this touching display, how painful to the true disciple those words of the Master, "Verily, verily, I say unto you that *one of you* shall deliver Me up." How heart-searching to them all! Has it no voice for us even to-day? In the sacred place of divine fellowship Satan seeks and strives for a place that through human instrumentality his evil plan may be carried into effect. "Satan entered into him." Solemn, awful word! "What thou doest do quickly," says the Lord to him.

The hour had come, and now He, the Son of God, was to be glorified and God to be glorified in Him. The time was short, for only a little while would He be with them. Soon He would enter upon those scenes where they could not then come. But in the time of His absence they were to be bound together in love; thus would all know them to be His disciples. He had loved them indeed. He was about to show His love in a fulness beyond all bounds. This they did not as yet understand. When they began to apprehend it, what a depth of meaning would be revealed in His words, "Love one another *as I have loved you!*" Fellow-Christians, what shall we say of ourselves? Is it any wonder the world knows us so little as *His* disciples? May the love of Christ dwell in us richly.

Now there follows, as they are together with Him, the betrayer gone, those surpassingly rich unfoldings of divine grace (John, chaps. 14-17), closing with that wonderful prayer in which He outpours His love's desire for His disciples, and for all those who should afterwards believe on Him through their testimony. After this, they go out into the garden where they were wont to meet, where Gethsemane's agony is experienced; then the betrayal, the mock trial, the passion of men let loose, and the sentence. Thus He enters upon the baptism with which He is to be baptized. All the flood-gates of Satan's hatred are opened upon Him, the waters from beneath; then the waters from above are poured out upon Him! As a result of it all, there flows forth from the opened gates of heaven the flood of infinite grace for poor, lost sinners who believe in Him.

But the heart dwells upon the closing moments spent with a departing friend. Love and thought linger around the last scene and words spoken by some loved one who has passed by the way of death. How sacredly sweet and precious the last discourse of our blessed Lord with His own! What a fulness pervades its simple yet wonderful language, and the memory of that last night must have been deeply written upon the minds and hearts

of those with Him. Our own hearts are made to burn with love and devotion as we ponder His words spoken just before those quickly following scenes, which were to rend His own soul with anguish, and seemed to dash to pieces all the hopes stirred in the breasts of the disciples.

Let us in thought take our place with them on that memorable night, and listen to His precious words. He knew their hearts were troubled. Blessed, sympathizing Lord, He knew the rising flood of emotion that was filling their breasts. The scene just passed had cast a cloud of uncertainty and sorrow over their feast together — one of their number should deliver Him up! He had been marked out. He had gone out with hasty step. What did it mean? Yet there must have been some rising thought that the hour was near when His enemies would take Him, even as He had told them before. But would He not deliver Himself from their hands? He who could cleanse the leper, raise the dead, and still the angry tempest of wind and wave, would He not also still the surging of His enemies' passion?

But He breaks in upon the thoughts of His troubled disciples and says, "Where I go ye cannot come." Were they to lose Him then? He was going, they must be left behind. The intimation that they were to be parted from

Him whose love and grace had won them, even to the leaving of all for His sake, came as an arrow of trouble into their souls. Truly, they would need one another's love under such circumstances, and so He says to them, "Love one another as I have loved you." He knew their need. He knew their trouble. He turns at once to meet it. "Let not your heart be troubled." They believed in God. Surely! Then He says, "Believe also in Me." He would not leave them alone, helpless, and so for their comfort (and for ours) He directs them to the coming of another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whose coming and presence was assured by His immutable "I will." They had never found His word to fail. His promises are rich with meaning. If there had not been the Father's house for them, He would have told them. He would not have led them along the path they were traveling had not unmingled blessing been in store for them.

And now He was going to prepare their place in that house—and what a place it would be since *He* prepared it! But how are they to enter? He will send for them? Nay! "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." What words with which to comfort their hearts and cheer their drooping spirits! He had much more to

deepest grief and anguish of His soul. He will speak with them again, however, with the lustre of resurrection glory about Him, and with a new revelation to impart.

They walk together to the Mount of Olives. He wishes to speak His last words to them in the quiet solitude of that garden where they oft resorted. It was His wont to go there; they must have known it well; it had become sacred to them. Blessed it was indeed to sit about Him there and listen to His words. What a picture!—these eleven men with Him who came from God, who was the image of God! They are together at the most momentous hour of the history of the universe, when the glory of God and eternal issues are involved.

He discourses with them again as they walk together in the evening shades enshrouding the beautiful Mount. His rejection which so fully proved the utter fruitlessness and worthless character of that vine which Jehovah had taken out of Egypt and planted in a choice land, and to which He had come seeking fruit, might well occupy His thoughts at that hour, and move Him to speak of Himself as “the True Vine,” and His own as the branches, and so to unfold to them the way of fruitfulness, of discipleship and testimony (John, chaps. 15, 16).

It is a mark of the divine suitability of His



actions, that He should thus speak to them as they walk together out into the world. When they are in the house, and at the table of communion, His words to them are of the Father's house and its related themes. Each has its proper scene and surroundings. So He speaks of that which was to prepare them for the path in the world when He was gone, as He says, that they may not be offended (16:1), but remember in the hour of the world's power that He had told them it should come to pass. In view of the path through the world He tells them that their whole source of life, strength, nourishment, and fruitfulness is found in Himself. He is the Vine, they are the branches. The branch is useless, is dead, unless it abide in the Vine, that the life-sap may permeate it, causing it to bud forth into fruitfulness. Likewise, they must abide in Him; and He would abide in them. It meant entire dependence, and constant, realized nearness to Himself, for apart from Him they could do nothing.

It seems to me, we may consider this discourse as a beautiful touch of His personal love for, and sympathy with, His own. Doubtless, the apprehension of some near approaching sorrow, especially the fear that soon they would lose Him, was casting its shadow over them. They might well press close to Him in

their anxiety as to the future, and the thought of facing it without Him. He knew their dependence upon Him, and recognized their individual weakness, and how truly desolate and helpless they would feel without Him. In His matchless way He meets their fear and uncertainty by unfolding to them that they would still be united to Him as branches to a vine, and that they would be cared for by the best of husbandmen, even the Father, and would bring forth fruit. A little later He assures them that the Father Himself loves them, because they loved Him, and believed that He came forth from God (16:27).

He closes His conversation by warning them of the hour of scattering, and how they would leave Him alone, yet the Father would be with Him. He had lovingly spoken these things to them that even in that hour of tribulation and fear they might have peace in Him, the great Overcomer.

Now, in the solitude of the Mount, gathered about Him in the shadow of the city walls, clinging closer to Him as the growing tenseness of the hour bears upon them, and a deeper shadow than of the night is beginning to cast its pall over their hearts, they see Him turn His eyes to heaven and pour out His soul in prayer to the Father—a wonderful prayer in which they

hear His intercession on their behalf as He places them before the Father concerning the scene through which they are to pass, and the glorious end for them in the glory (John 17).

The prayer ended, He walks with them toward the brook Kedron, and passes into the Garden of Gethsemane.

As He walks with them, He speaks again. He desires that they really apprehend the meaning of this hour. Having already comforted them with those precious words, "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid," He can speak more plainly of what is to happen. "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee." The sufferings and the glory are here put together for their instruction; the dark hour of smiting and separation soon is to be followed by the joyous, wondrous meeting again in the familiar scenes of Galilee. The night would be very dark, but the brightness of the morning would more than compensate.

Again He speaks of Peter's denial. He had already spoken of it when with them in the upper room. It must have pained His heart very deeply; surely, not to wound His loved one, but, in the outreaching of love, to break if possible

by this second witness the spell of self-confidence and boastful zeal which had particularly ensnared him, and (in measure) his fellow-disciples also.

Now He must be alone to place the burden of His heart before His Father. He asks them to sit down where oftentimes they had been together. All the memories of those past seasons could not but flood their minds, and now He had told them that this was to be the night of offence and scattering, of smiting and of separation. A dull heavy pain filled their hearts, it benumbed their minds, their eyes grew heavy, the sleep of a nameless sorrow was creeping over them. He goes further into the shadow. They in some little measure felt the oppression of the hour, but its awful meaning in a way entirely unknown to them pressed upon His own heart and soul. He was "sorrowful and very heavy." He must have companionship while yet He may. He takes aside with Him the three who had seen His glory on the holy Mount. They are to witness also the anguish of His soul in the hour of His exceeding sorrow—"Tarry here and watch with Me," He says. He goes a few steps beyond. They look at the retreating figure; He falls upon His face in an agony of prayer. Never before had they seen Him overwhelmed with sorrow like this.

Dumb with amazement as they gaze upon that prostrate Form they are soon overcome by sleep. They could not watch. Could *we*?

The flash of torches, and the tramp of many feet disturb the usual stillness of the garden, and warn of the approach of a crowd which at that time can hardly have any friendly purpose in view. They are preceded by one drawing near by stealthy step, to whom it is evident this secluded spot is quite familiar. In the dim light, face and figure are not at first recognized by the eleven, but his voice, as he utters his hypocritical greeting, makes him known to them. "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Mingled feelings must have stirred the eleven disciples as they began to awaken to the realization of what was taking place, bound as they were with deep affection to Him whom they owned as Lord and Master. We know, by virtue of human kinship, their mingled feelings, but who shall interpret those of Him who is the object of the base denial and conspiracy now come to full bloom? "Mine own familiar friend hath lifted up his heel against Me." He to whom had been given the token of love and friendship plays into the hands of the Master's foes. The One with whom he had companied during three years of labor and service, whose

ministrations of loving care he had received, he now gives up to His enemies for a paltry thirty pieces of silver! Judas thus stands out as the incarnation of Satan who had entered into him, expressing through him his malignity against the blessed Son of God who had "entered his house and spoiled his goods." It was now his hour, and in it the power of darkness was unveiled in direct and violent assault upon God and His holy servant Jesus.

They came with swords and staves as against a bandit leader, an outlaw. He had moved among them for three years past, yet no hand had been laid upon Him. Without sword or weapon He had moved on in His path. He had made no demonstration against them, though they oft expressed their deep hatred and murderous purpose towards Him. I wonder what their thoughts were as they contemplated taking as a brigand Him whose voice and hand had raised the dead, healed lepers, made the deaf hear, the blind to see, and fed Israel's thousands! But then He was so really *man*, why fear that they could not overcome Him? Still they had better be prepared, so they take swords and staves—the sight of them might prevent Him from showing resistance.

They have come, and their coveted prize is before them. But there is no mad rush to take

their prey. They strangely halt as they come into His presence, and hear Him speak to their base guide, "the son of perdition." They hear Him, who spake as never man spake, utter love's remonstrance to His treacherous disciple who had told his followers they were to take Him whom he would *kiss*. Yet they make no movement to accomplish their purpose, held, it would seem, till some word of command impelled them to go forward. Who would give it? Who?—as they stood in the presence of Him "who is God over all, blessed forever." The very power of Satan himself is impotent to energize his poor dupes. He turns from Judas, who had impressed his false lips upon His cheek, to the multitude before Him, stilled and helpless in His presence, just as the waves and the wind must be quiet at His word. They have no power to come forward, though He whom they sought had been marked out by the treacherous sign.

Now He speaks: "Whom seek ye?" (John 18: 1-8). It is no vain query, but His appeal to them. Has that strange restraint which fell upon them as they came into His presence been a witness to their conscience, an appeal to their hearts? Has it melted them, has it made them ready to own Him as Son of God and King of Israel, and to cast down the arms of their re-

bellion? They answer only with the name that spoke of His rejection and desposal—"Jesus of Nazareth." Still they do not press forward. They cannot take Him whom they seek as a victim until He permits them to do so. "I am He," is His simple response. With the utterance of this declaration "they all went backward and fell to the ground!" How strange this scene! Who is this Man whose simple utterance deprives the armed host of all power, in whose presence they are impotent to do their will? Can no arrow of conviction pierce their blind and sin-hardened souls, and awake some realization of who this, the Object of their hate, must be?

It is as a last appeal to them. Routed by His simple word, are they so dull as not to appreciate that they can have no power over Him unless He allows them? Why rouse them from their amazement and impotency? Why does He not speak the word for the earth to open its mouth and swallow them up? But how, then, would the Scriptures and the predetermined will of God be fulfilled? There is a path for Him to walk in, and He will walk in it; but it must be as the Victor over all. He then speaks again, demanding whom they seek. The opportunity is again given them to acknowledge His true dignity after this signal evidence



of His mastery over them. But they reply as before—"Jesus of Nazareth."

He chooses that there should be no more delay, and acting still as Master over all circumstances, He puts Himself in their hands while He demands liberty for His own poor, feeble disciples. They are not to lay hands upon them, even upon impetuous Peter; but once again He lets His grace and power be known in healing an enemy (John 18:8-11; Luke 22:50, 51). Will this not reach their evil hearts? Can they still find it in them to take and bind *this* Man? He has withdrawn His restraining power; they are free; nay, they are the abject slaves of another power to whom sin has enslaved them—even the prince of this world; so they took Jesus and bound Him, and led Him away.

What a sight for heaven to behold! For Michael and Gabriel with all their mighty legions to look upon! Their God and King bound as a victim of creature hate! He whose word of power upheld all things, who, though bound and led as a captive by creatures dependent upon Him for the very strength by which they roped His wrists, was the upholder of the universe. Strange and awful sight! But within a few hours it shall be surpassed by scenes of greater magnitude and of supreme mystery.

The Judge of all the earth, who cannot but do right is in the place of being judged, and the creature of His hand sits in its miserable pomp as the judge of the Creator. Who holds the heavens in restraint while these things are enacted? It is He who stands to be judged! How can the myriad hosts who sang at His birth now withhold the expression of their wrath as they behold Him bound as a malefactor by those so inferior to themselves in the ranks of creation? He Himself has placed His restraining hand upon them, while He has lifted it from those creatures of the dust who have risen in rebellion and hatred against Him. He chooses that man, His creature, shall show out all the depths of evil in his heart against Himself, and He will meet it all in a way surpassing the power of any words to tell. Through all these scenes, to the very end, He passes as the Victor, though man in the insanity of hate thinks Him but the pawn in his puny hand.

“And the men that held Jesus mocked Him, and smote Him. And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him saying, ‘Prophecy, who is it that smote Thee?’ And many other things blasphemously spake they against Him” (Luke 22: 63, 64).

“Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him: and others smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying, ‘Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ; who is he that smote Thee?’ ” (Matt. 26: 67, 68).

Not this only, His loved ones fled in terror and dismay, and he who alone of their number ventured near, only disgraced himself, and added to His sorrow by repeated denials that he ever knew Him.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is an early hour, but there is a great stir. An august assembly is gathering—the chief of the people, and the vice-regent of God, the High Priest, with his associate counsellors sit as judges, to judge as arch-blasphemer a Man so evidently different from all others—but what of that? He is in their power now, and His very difference from all others was sufficient reason to get Him out of the way—God had drawn too near to them. How large man has written the monstrous evil of his heart!

Witnesses arise; their testimony is given suited to the desires of judge and jury who preside at this trial scene. Their lying testimony is to them the truth, because according to their own hearts’ wish. They rend their garments

and condemn the Holy One as worthy of death. But they dare not execute it themselves, it can only be by the aid of others. Then, "To Pilate!" He, the representative of mighty Rome, must pass upon the execution of death. Ordered by an inscrutable wisdom, not only the acme of the religious world, but the great political world is to be tested by the presentation of this Man and the trial of His case. Little did they think it was in reality *their* trial, not His, and that the High Court of heaven would pass its verdict upon them in that same hour in which they were presuming to sentence Him. Herod too must have his part in this supreme tragedy, and he with his men of war set Him, "the Judge of all the earth," as an object of their mockery. Through this bandying of the Lord of Glory between Pilate's judgment hall and Herod's palace, from which the blood of John still cried aloud, these two sordid enemies became friends.

Back He is sent to the Roman Governor to have the people choose between Himself and Barabbas, and the judgment hall shall echo with the hoarse blood-thirsty cry, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" The soldiery then make Him the butt of their profane mockery, before leading Him forth to Golgotha to be crucified. Yet never a word of complaint, nor a murmur!

Could they not discern Him to be different from all others?

\* \* \* \* \*

Events progressed most swiftly. Was not the Father hastening through the humiliation and sufferings of His Beloved? It is yet but the hour of nine, and they nailed Him to the cross. Two malefactors are crucified with Him, with Jesus in the midst. Three hours of martyrdom pass on, while oaths, curses and maledictions are uttered by the dying robbers, and jeers, taunts and revilings were cast upon Him on the centre cross by the rulers of the Jews. But no retort escaped the lips of the Holy Sufferer. Instead, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

What manner of man is this? Some such question must have pierced the soul of that poor dying thief, for from his heart he expressed true self-judgment and faith as to the coming King on the cross beside Him. Answering his companion with whom he had at first joined in railing upon Jesus (Matt. 27: 44) he said, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: *but this Man hath done nothing amiss.*" And to Jesus he said, "Lord, remem-

ber me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." He owns Jesus, the Crucified, as Lord Jehovah and King. To him, those lips (which have been so silent under the awful agonies of the cross and the venom of His foes) were opened in immediate response, giving divine assurance of blessing that very day (Luke 23 : 40-43). Though on the cross, exposed to the burning heat of the sun, enduring the excruciating sufferings of crucifixion, this Man is unchanged! He is still of the same compassionate spirit, forgiving the self-confessed, but believing, sinner; for He came into the world to save, not to judge (John 3:16-18; 1 Timothy 1:15). And though in such appalling circumstances of shame and torture He is still conscious of His own divine right and power to bless.

Looking with eyes still full of tenderness and pity upon the crowd, the soldiers, the mocking Jews, the sorrowing women, and finding the object of His quest—His mother—He manifests in an unforgettable manner the perfectness of His manhood and the reality of His affection for her whose loving hands had so often ministered to Him. He knew how the sword was piercing through her soul, even as Simeon had foretold (Luke 2:35). She, of all others, needed a word from Him—"Woman,

behold thy son." How it must have moved her sorrowing heart to know that even in such an hour, He was lovingly caring for her! Then, turning His gaze toward His beloved disciple standing near, He said, "Behold thy mother!"

He was always in season, for He knew all things. Just a little later He could not have seen her, nor she Him. Suddenly, a horror of great darkness spread over the noonday sky—a strange, preternatural night enveloped the whole scene. Angry voices ceased; in their sullen hate the mocking Jews slunk away from the hill; the Roman soldiers filled with superstitious dread doubtless feared that the gods for some reason were showing displeasure; and afar off stood those of His acquaintance, heart-broken, filled with fear.

Three long hours had almost passed. Quietness had fallen upon the scene, induced by its mystic strangeness. The taunting rulers and the jeering passers-by had been awed into silence. What did it all mean? Would this darkness never lift? Suddenly a loud voice broke the oppressive stillness. Strange and awful words came from the Sufferer on the centre cross: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

His death was as unique as His person and life.

But listen, He speaks again—"I thirst." The burning thirst caused by crucifixion came early to the dying victim. He had been upon the cross six hours, and not one murmuring word had passed His lips. Why this request? Unimpaired in spirit, though enduring most intense bodily suffering, unchanged in purpose of heart, all Scripture must be fulfilled. Though in the unspeakable terror and anguish of that to which His cry gives interpretation, an unfulfilled scripture is before His perfect mind; hence His cry, "I thirst." This being answered, three glorious words ring out in a loud voice,

"IT IS FINISHED."

All is now accomplished, and with bowed head He yielded up His spirit to the Father. Perfect Master over all to the very end!

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That head has been lifted up in the glory of God. Once pierced by thorns, it is now crowned with glory and honor. The victorious, glorified Saviour's atoning death is now efficacious for all who receive Him as having died for them according to the Scriptures, as having borne our sins in His own body on the tree, as having died the Just for the unjust, that they who believe might be brought to God as cleansed from all sin through the shed blood of Christ. (He-



brews 10; 1 Cor. 15: 1-28; 1 Pet. 2: 21-25; 3: 18; Romans 3: 20-26; 4: 5-8; 1 John 1: 7.)

Already on earth from those who thus believe in Jesus, and in heaven for all eternity, this tribute is and shall be given to Him, "the Faithful Witness, the first-begotten from the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth, whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, God over all, blessed forever, "very God and very man," in the truth of His person.

*"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."*

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## THE CROSS

What hour like thine is clothed in depth of gloom,  
O Cross? Thy speech is that of judgment for man's  
For in that hour the Christ of God is seen, [sin,  
The sinless Burden-bearer of man's sin.  
His breast is bared to ward the Judge's stroke;  
The gathering clouds of wrath divine on Calv'ry's hill  
Have spent their fire upon the centre cross,  
Whereon that precious Victim hung, the Life of men.

That cry speaks forth the sorrow of Thy heart,  
And yet Thy voice sends forth its note of victory  
Which tells of judgment passed, the work all done,  
The darkness of that hour now o'er; the cloud, too,  
          gone,  
The scabbard holds the sword; the sinner freed;  
And all the claims of righteousness are fully met,  
Whilst now the stream of love has found its course.

O Cross! Thou tellest forth that God is love;  
Thy story, too, the summing up of ages past—  
The consummation of the sin of man.  
Yet fully in it all we trace Divine decree  
And see the shining of eternal truth!  
There from the Lamb of sacrifice the blood has flowed  
Which washeth every stain of sin away  
And changes all the depth of sin's deep scarlet hue  
To snow-white purity.

Thus opened are the channels of eternal love.  
The purposes and counsels of the past eternity  
Converge and meet, encircling round Thy thorn-  
          crowned brow—  
Their answer fully giv'n; the heart of God is satisfied  
In that blest One the cross has borne 'twixt earth and  
          heaven  
For us to gaze upon, and life is given to every one  
Who, with the heart believing, looks upon  
That stricken One.

But now we see Thee on the Father's throne  
No longer stricken; Thou art now the Glorified.  
Thy once pierced brow is crowned with many crowns,  
And with eternal glory Thy blest visage shines.  
We gaze upon Thee there, we wait Thy call—  
The Victor's shout, heraldic note, the angel's trump;  
And with Thee we shall rise, and like Thee; then  
Forever in the glory Thou hast made our own  
With Thee abide.

# **Seven Distinct Titles of Christ in the Fourth Gospel**

**A Study of His Abiding Sufficiency**

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The Gospel of John has a peculiar preciousness, because of its characteristic presentation of the Person of Christ. What is said of the “beginning of miracles” which He performed in Cana, is true of the whole Gospel—it is the manifestation of His glory. Essentially doctrinal in character as compared with the Synoptic Gospels which are so largely historical, there is much less narrative and much more discourse giving truth concerning the Father and Himself, and the fellowship of eternal life.

The Word, that divine Person become flesh, is very largely the subject engaging the Evangelist; and that He is the source of eternal life to all who come to Him and believe on Him. Then, His relation to that life communicated and dependent in them is developed in a very full and blessed way. This should specially in-

terest us, since by receiving Christ we are introduced into the divine affections and privileged to share in divine relationships. As the fulness and perfect revelation of these are found in the Son by whom we know the Father, our proper portion is fellowship with these divine Persons in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is being in the light, and having the light of life as following Him who is the light.

What relates to Israel and Old Testament prophecies is here very little before us, but the largeness of God's grace reaching out to "the world" comes fully into view. This Gospel, as John's Epistles, gives what *abides* for individual joy and blessing, no matter how great may be the ruin of the dispensation, brought in through man's unfaithfulness, as to the truth of the Church.

In no other Gospel do we hear the emphatic and blessed "I am's" of the divine Son. We are made to realize that they come from Him who *is* the I AM, the eternal self-existing One. What weight of authority this gives to His every statement! How good to have among them His absolute declaration of the infallibility of the Word of God, "Scripture cannot be broken!"

Seven times Christ makes distinct and positive statements of what He is in Himself, pre-

faced by His immutable "I am." They are not concerning His deity, though related to it—for this truth like a golden cord runs through the whole Gospel. Like precious jewels these statements depend from it; their gleaming facets present His glories in various ways relative to the eternal life which those have who receive Him.

These statements, or rather, titles of our Lord, are embedded in His teaching as recorded by John. Our study of each of them therefore requires careful consideration of the context. This will illuminate their meaning. We need not anticipate what will come before us as each one is taken up. Here let us simply enumerate them in the order of their occurrence.

1. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE (ch. 6).
  2. I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (chs. 8, 9).
  3. I AM THE DOOR (ch. 10).
  4. I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD (ch. 10).
  5. I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE (ch. 11).
  6. I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE (ch. 14).
  7. I AM THE VINE (ch. 15).
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## 1.—“I am the Bread of Life”

The connection of the miracle recorded in John 6 with the discourse which follows, suggests that as bread is the sustenance for the natural life, so is Jesus for the life of which He is the source.

There are several important lines of truth in the Lord's teaching centering around this title. Their consideration opens up the fulness of thought in the expression, “Bread of Life.”

We have His repeated affirmation that this Bread, which He Himself is, has come down “out of heaven” (vers. 32, 33, 35, 38, 50, 51, 58).

He makes known the Father's work of drawing souls, the Son's purpose in coming, the certainty of His receiving all those who come to Him as a result of the Father's work, His exercise of resurrection power on their behalf, and the believer's blessing — “life eternal” (vers. 36-47).

Of life the Lord speaks frequently (vers. 33, 40, 47, 51, 54, 59, 63), and twice expresses Himself on this subject from the negative side—“not die” (ver. 50), “no life in yourselves” (ver. 53). Neither of these refer to what is physical: the former means never to know eternal separation from God; the latter means

having no spiritual relationship with God. Such relationship subsists only in the power of divine life communicated from God.

In answering the question, "How can He give us this flesh to eat?" the Lord makes known the foundation upon which all rests—His sacrifice (ver. 53); then comes the necessity for the appropriation of this work—eating and drinking being the figure of assimilation by faith. It is evident that the spiritual import of eating and drinking is believing, for he that "believes," even as he that "eats" and "drinks," *"has life eternal"* (vers. 47, 54). The blessedness of this life is defined for us in vers. 56, 57. "He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood *dwells in Me and I in him*. As the living Father has sent Me and I live on account of the Father, *he also who eats Me shall live also on account of Me.*"

In conclusion, the Lord affirms that, "This is the Bread which has come down out of heaven . . . he that eats this Bread shall live forever."

"Not die" and "live forever" are reciprocal, involving the accomplishment of resurrection. This the Lord refers to as part of the Father's will, and His own work on behalf of those who believe on Him—"I will raise him up" (vers. 39, 40, 44, 54). This is twice put as the corollary of life eternal (vers. 40, 54).

Here then we have important teaching concerning the Lord's Person; His work, both as regards sacrifice and exercise of divine power; and what believers have, "life eternal," and its essential character, dwelling in Christ and He in them. This is consequent upon believing on Him, for by so doing they eat His flesh and drink His blood, becoming participators in His life so that they live forever. For the realization of this life in its fulness resurrection power must be exercised. Then all who believe will be in the full power and blessing of life eternal.

The *abiding* sufficiency of the Lord Jesus is set forth as the source and sustenance of life eternal, the One by whose power those who have that life by faith in Him shall be brought into its full blessedness. All this is connected with the title our Lord takes in this chapter—"I am the Bread of Life."

He uses this symbol—bread—in several connections. He is "the True Bread" (ver. 33), that is, real, genuine, in contrast with the false, the imperfect, or the typical. He is "the Bread of God." This denotes character. It is suited to what God is, it is given by Him, it is *He* who came down out of heaven. He is "the Living Bread"—Bread in which inherently the principle and power of life resides. Therefore,



"He that eats this Bread shall live forever" (vers. 50, 51, 59). He is "the Bread of Life." This is His character, so that those who eat partake of what He is as this Bread, and so live, as He says, "on account of Me."

As the Living Bread, He is the Son to whom the Father has given to have life in Himself, even as the Father (John 5:26). They that hear the voice of the Son of God shall live. By His testimony, His words, life is communicated, so He could declare, "The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." They are of spiritual import and life-imparting, as heard, *i.e.*, believed, received by faith. Of those who would not hear He must say, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life" (5:40). The Lord puts together these two thoughts of coming and believing in relation to Himself as the Bread. "He that comes to Me shall never hunger, and he that believes shall never thirst at any time" (ver. 35). This emphasizes the abiding sufficiency of what He imparts. It indicates the perpetual satisfaction which characterizes life eternal, for that is what he has who believes on Him.

Let us consider the Lord's words in vers. 54, 56, 57. "He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood has life eternal." As reciprocal to this, and thus explanatory of it, the Lord says, "He

that eats my flesh and drinks my blood *dwells in Me and I in him.*" This defines the character of the life, and the meaning is further developed by the comparison made in ver. 57. Note this is all spoken of in the present. The thought is not that of eating once for all, but of present continuous action — constancy of appropriation, the abiding activity of faith partaking of "the food which abides unto life eternal." Two important considerations result : He ever abides the same, the Bread by which we live forever ; and we remain ever dependent upon Him who is this to us, the Source and Sustenance of all blessing for eternity. Life eternal is thus our dwelling in Him and He in us. This is according to the manner in which the Son lived as sent by the living Father. He did not live an independent life, but one of which the Father was both Source and Object. So it is with him who eats the Bread of Life.

John's teaching in his Epistles is in line with this. "God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." "God has given to us eternal life ; and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life." Certainly we have Him when it is true that in eating His flesh and drinking His blood we dwell in Him and *He in us.* "These things have I written to you that ye may know that

ye have eternal life who believe [which, as we have seen, is figured in the eating and drinking of which the Lord speaks] on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 4:9; 5:11-13).

The foundation of this blessedness is sacrifice. This the Lord plainly teaches. "The bread withal which I shall give is my flesh," and answering the question as to how He could give this flesh He immediately speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. This separation between flesh and blood signifies the work of sacrifice, for the flesh of the offerings could only be eaten when the blood had been poured out. This must be appropriated by faith. Death, then, is the way in which He gives His flesh, that life may be imparted to and sustained in the one who appropriates the meaning of His sacrifice.

The Lord speaks of this as an eating of Himself. "He also who eats *Me*." Then, "This is the Bread which has come down out of heaven;" "The Bread of God is *He* who comes down out of heaven;" "*I* am the living Bread which came down out of heaven;" and "*I* am come down from heaven." These statements show that we must think of the Person Himself. The terms "flesh" and "blood" are used to teach the truth of sacrifice, of *Him* giving Himself for our sins that we might live through Him,

that He, assimilated by faith, might be both life and the food of life to the believer who then can say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

One more point calls for remark—the Lord's emphasized repetition of His statement, "Come down out of heaven." It must be clear that all the teaching we have considered has its connection with Him in His humiliation and sacrifice. It is "the flesh of the Son of Man and His blood" (ver. 53)—a title expressing what He is as come into the world, as well as an official place which He fills because of so coming into creation. Compare Ps. 8 and Heb. 2. But while this is true, the fact of who He is, this One sent by the Father who calls Himself the Bread of Life, is enshrined in the expression so often repeated. He is "the Son" (ver. 40)—the Only-begotten, of the same substance as the Father from all eternity, not as created at any time, but as ever having the same essence and ever subsisting in the relationship which the name Son imports. He came down from heaven. He is the Bread of God. Now faith's appropriation, and consequent participation in what it means for Him to have so come, is alone made possible through sacrifice. The truth of who He is gives such character to His humanity that as a result the eating of His flesh and

drinking of His blood brings the one so doing into life eternal.

Life eternal is that which the Father has in Himself, and which the Son in humanity has been given to have in Himself. We see Him here, the eternal Son manifested in flesh, receiving all from the Father, and receiving in such fulness that He must be given equal honor with the Father. As the Bread He is before us in this place of dependent manhood, yet the one all-sufficient source of life to man, and its sustenance forever. The underlying reason for all of this is found in the truth of the Person who came, taking up into His essential being full human nature, becoming man and dwelling among men. Being in the circumstances incident to this (though having equality with God and oneness with the Father), He speaks from that standpoint as having received all from the Father and of holding all as dependent upon the Father. This is the manifestation of His moral glory, as obedient, lowly, dependent—the Father being the abiding source and object of His life as the incarnate Son.

Now since *He* is the Bread of Life, and is eaten of by those who believe, and since He is none other than the eternal Son—God the Son—does our identification with Him as taught in John 6 involve participation in deity? This

is guarded against, since such identification is by His sacrifice, by death. Apart from this He must abide alone. Through it He gains companions who are not said to share His personality, but the life He has and gives to those who come to Him and believe on Him. This life has all its character and blessing from the truth of who He is. Then, since such as we have it, the power of resurrection must be exercised on our behalf to bring us into its fullness. We must be changed, so that we may be like Him. At present, both as to nature and the state of the body, our condition is such that we could not actually, in the final sense, inherit the kingdom of God. Resurrection effects *deliverance* from all not in accord with life eternal, and *change* to what is perfectly suited to that life. Therefore we have the Lord repeatedly speaking of raising up those who believe and have life eternal. Even in His case, as far as the body was concerned, change was necessary; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15: 50), and He took part in both (Heb. 2: 14). As to Him such a change has only to do with the elements of the body, and in no way has to do with conditions resulting from an evil nature as with us.

Here it is simply a matter of what is natural, and so suited to this present form of life on

the one hand, and on the other of what is spiritual, and so suited to that heavenly sphere which is characterized by life eternal.

Furthermore, in His case, resurrection was the inevitable consequence of Him being the living One who became dead (Rev. 1: 18); and the witness to *His* perfection as the Holy One, *His* triumph over Satan, and *His* full acceptance by God as the Man who had suffered death for God's glory and to make His purpose toward man effectual, having made propitiation by the offering up of Himself to God as a sacrifice for sin.

"What we shall be has not yet been manifested; we know that if it is manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every one that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure." This is the hope of eternal life (1 John 3: 2, 3; 1 Cor. 15: 49, 50; Phil. 3: 20, 21).

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## 2.—"I am the Light of the World"

The Lord declares this title in connection with two incidents, the woman taken in adultery (ch. 8: 1-12), and the blind man of John 9 (ver. 6).

If from John 6 we learn the abiding sufficiency of Christ as the source and sustenance of life eternal, from these two chapters we gather truth regarding the Lord's divine testimony, the contrast between Himself and the world—light and darkness, the character of him who rules the darkness, and the portion of those who follow the Lord, and thus learn what His leadership means for them. All of this is brought out into relief upon the background of truth as to who He is, whose word and work so absolutely set forth the Person Himself that He can say, "I AM the Light of the World."

The Lord's words in ch. 8:12 serve as a guide to these various features of truth, which focus our gaze upon Him who must be found pre-eminent in all things.

*"I am the Light of the World."* There are three features to consider: (a) the Person; (b) what He is—the light; (c) the sphere—the world.

*"He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."* Here two features are prominent: (a) the disciple; (b) his path, presented in a twofold way—what it is not in relation to, darkness; then what is characteristic of it, the light of life. This lat-



ter statement expresses what the Person is to the one who follows Him.

These things are developed in the teaching of John 8, and in ch. 9 the case of the blind man serves as an illustration of them.

Let us consider these things in the order indicated.

*The Person.* Again, as in John 6, emphasis is laid upon the fact of who He is. He is the Son (ver. 37). Though also, as He says, "A man who has spoken the truth" (ver. 40). He unequivocally declares, "Before Abraham was I am;" and asserts that they will know Him to be this when they "shall have lifted up the Son of Man" (vers. 58, 24, 28). Here He is taking the name of deity (Exod. 3:14). Though in manhood, and speaking of Himself as "a man," He declares "I came forth from God and am come from Him; for neither am I come of Myself, but He has sent Me." It is the divine Person who was with God and was God, who, coming in accordance with the eternal purpose, took up human nature. This involved dependence and obedience, though He remains all that He ever was. So He speaks as being in this place; He uses the language suited to it. Such a statement, parallel to many others in the Gospel, clearly intimates that as to the truth

what He said and all that He did constituted the light. But this also was the perfect expression of what He was Himself, so that He could answer them as He did, and declare, "*I am the light.*"

*The Sphere.* This is the world. This marks the universality of the light. It is for all, not any special class, nation, or race. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." "The life has been manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and has been manifested unto us." This was "The true Light... which, coming into the world, is light to every man." The true Light was He who "was in the world, and the world had its being through Him, and the world knew Him not." So this Light appeared in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not. This is the moral character of the world, and the Lord refers to it in connection with our subject. He says to the Jews, "Ye are from beneath...ye are of this world." He stands in strongest contrast—"I am from above, I am not of this world." They will not come to Him for life, they will not believe His testimony, they refuse the light which is shining. Because of such unbelief, they (and all like them) shall die in their sins. They are in the bondage of sin, and because of

their unbelief He must say to them, "Ye are of the devil." This exposes the character of the world, and also brings into view the spiritual power which rules it. Satan is its prince and god. Compare Eph. 2: 1-3; 6: 11, 12; Col. 1: 12; Gal. 1: 4; Acts 26: 18.

The Lord leaves no room for doubt as to the character of the devil. He has not stood in the truth, speaks falsehood, he is a liar and its father (ver. 44). These features mark him and the world-system to which he gives character, for it lies in the wicked one (1 John 5: 19). The Lord Jesus speaks truth (ver. 45) and is the light, and so He is not of the world, since it is characterized by moral darkness in which lurks falsehood and unbelief. Through these its god accomplishes his blinding work in those who reject the light (2 Cor. 4: 4).

All the light there is for the world is Jesus, the Son of God. He is the true Light, the only light and the light for all. Who He is, what He is, and His testimony comprise the light. It is the revelation of the Father. All that is in the world is not of the Father (1 John 2: 16). All that the Father is is found in the Son. "He who confesses the Son has the Father also."

Let us consider what it means to follow this blessed Person. It means discipleship, which is the acknowledgment of Him as Leader and

character from the life, for it proceeds from it. Having this illumination as following Him who is the light, the darkness vanishes. Spiritually awake and raised up from among the dead, those once dead in trespasses and sins have Christ shining upon them. They belong to the day.

Another thought helps to expand the meaning of "the light of life" which belongs to the disciples of Christ, marked as such by abiding in Christ's word, knowing the truth, and being made free. It is this, "If any one shall keep My word, he shall never see death" (ver. 51)—death, of course, in its full meaning of eternal separation from God under judgment. Into this those enter who die in their sins. "Never see death" is the corollary of having "the light of life." Death is banished. The outer darkness can never be known by those who have the light of life. Physical death may come to the believer, but the Lord has repeatedly declared, "I will raise him up at the last day." In the meantime as absent from the body he is present with the Lord, which "is very much better." This is not seeng death. It is an advance in the path of life. The dawning light is brightening toward meridian day. He is in the light of life.

### 3.—“I am the Door”

There is undoubted connection between the discourse in which this title occurs and the narrative of the blind man. He is cast out of the fold of Judaism by its false shepherds, only to find the Door through which blessing and liberty are entered under the care of the true Shepherd, the Son of God.

From the allegory Jesus uses in reference to the sheepfold, we see that the door and he who enters thereby are closely related. The door is opened only to the true Shepherd. Those who are not this climb up some other way. Such are thieves and robbers. The shepherd coming in by the right way calls his sheep by name and leads them out. Judaism was the fold, in which the sheep were confined. For their full blessing they must be separated from this fold. This was the work of the true Shepherd who thus became “the Door of the sheep.”

The symbol of the door is used in three ways. It signifies the way by which the true Shepherd comes in; then the Lord applies it to Himself as the way of *exit* for His Jewish sheep out of the fold of Judaism; in the third place He again applies it to Himself, but as the way of *entrance*. In this connection He does not speak of sheep, He says “any one.” This agrees

with the universal bearing of salvation presented in John's Gospel. It expresses that abounding grace which cannot be confined within the old restricted sphere connected with law.

The door of the fold, opened only to the true Shepherd, leads us to think of those characteristics which must mark the one to whom the porter will open. Jesus gave every evidence, according to the testimony of the Word, that He was the Shepherd of the sheep. He entered the fold in the legitimate way, fully accredited.

Being admitted, He began to call His sheep. They know His voice, He leads them out, going before them. The blind man is an example. To such *He* is "The Door of the sheep." He is the way out for them from all the restrictions of the Jewish fold. The fold represents Judaism in which the sheep were shut up under law until the faith was revealed which would bring them out of spiritual infancy into full sonship, out of bondage under law into the freedom Christ gives (Gal. 3: 23-26; 5: 1). This great change could only be through the coming of the Son whom God sent forth in the fulness of the time, "come of woman, come under law, that He might redeem those under law that we [Jewish believers] might receive sonship" (Gal. 4: 4, 5). What this involved for Jewish believers was not realized by them in the days

of the Lord's ministry. Indeed, before it could be fully understood, the Spirit must come to lead into the truth through such ministry as that of the apostle Paul.

In the third use of this symbol it is not the question of exit, but of entrance. "I am the Door: if any one enter in by Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and shall go out, and shall find pasture." Note that here He does not say, "Door of the sheep." The Lord is not thinking exclusively of His Jewish sheep, He is taking a larger view which embraces others. In fact He has other sheep which are not of this fold, as He says, and so His statement is more general—"any one." It is all who believe. Jews and Gentiles alike enter by Him into the same blessing. Note Gal. 4: 5, 6, "That *we* [Jewish believers] might receive sonship. But because *ye* [Gentile believers] are sons." Thus Jews and Gentiles form one flock, as the Lord says, "I have other sheep which are not of this fold; those also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd."

Four features are mentioned: entering in, salvation, going in and out, and pasture. To enter means our coming to and believing on Him. Then we have deliverance from our former position and condition; a consequent

state of freedom or liberty; then provision. It is receiving of His fulness, grace upon grace. We receive life; pass out of darkness into light; enjoy freedom, given by the Son through the truth of which His Word is the perfect expression; and then our heritage, the pasture land of all spiritual blessings. Typically, we may find these blessings illustrated in the Passover, the Red Sea, and the journey to Sinai during which the people enjoyed the gracious provision of God, and along with this what Canaan meant for them as the redeemed of the Lord. Or again, compare Rom. 3 as setting forth salvation; Rom. 6, 7, our liberty; Rom. 8 our pasture—the things of the Spirit, the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the glory still to be revealed.

“I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (ver. 10). Christ is the door to the fulness of Christian blessing. Entering by Him we pass out of the position and state in which we were alienated and enemies into the new position and state of being reconciled, sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called saints; no longer in bondage or fear, as sons we rejoice in God and address Him as Father. Many features of this life in its abundant character are given by the Lord in chs. 13-17 of this Gospel. Its revelation is completed in the Epistles, especially those of Paul and John.



#### 4.—“I am the Good Shepherd”

The Lord's teaching in connection with this title develops along two principal lines:

1. *His relation to His sheep.*
2. *The relation between the Father and Himself.*

Truth concerning His Person again appears. In the face of those who would stone Him, the Lord declares “I am Son of God” (ver. 36). The twofold test of Christianity is the confession of “Jesus Christ come in flesh”—that is the Person who so came, and therefore “that Jesus is the Son of God.” It is the truth that He who was with God, and was God, the Son of the Father (not another), came in flesh. Jesus Christ was that Person.

The Lord is spoken of as Son of God in three different relations. Being born of the virgin, He is called Son of God (Lk. 1:35). He is marked out Son of God in power by resurrection of the dead (Rom. 1:4). And He is the Only-begotten Son whom the Father sent into the world, sanctified, that is, set apart to the accomplishment of the special mission entrusted to Him. The Father sent the Son as Saviour of the world (1 John 4:14). It is in

this third connection that John speaks of Jesus as the Son of God. He lays emphasis on this side of the truth. The manner of His coming, beyond what "in flesh" imports, is not given in detail by him, either in the Gospel or his Epistles. Other inspired writers treat of those details. Nevertheless, that "in flesh" means full human nature, so that the Son was seen and known as a man, is clearly brought out by John, not however in formal doctrinal statements, but incidentally.

Let us first consider the Lord's relation as Good Shepherd to His sheep.

As the Bread, He gives and sustains life eternal. As the Light, He delivers out of darkness, brings into freedom by the truth, giving the light of life. As the Door, He opens up to us fullest blessing. As the Good Shepherd, it is *power*, sufficient for every need, assuring preservation from every enemy, and perfect security as guarded by the Son and the Father. It is power which flows from the rights of the Person of Christ, but exercised in obedience to the Father—the Father having most intimate relation to all according to the ever-subsisting oneness of these Divine Persons. The Lord says, "I and the Father are one...the Father is in Me and I in Him." How blessed to follow such a Shepherd who according to the rights

of His Person can exercise power which no one can hinder or effectually resist. He came in by the door. It was His absolute right to do so, for He gave the evidence of who He was. *He* calls, leads out, and goes before His sheep. There are other sheep, *He* must bring them; and He will form one flock under Himself, the one Shepherd. All this shows power in exercise. Then no one takes His life. *He* lays it down, *He* takes it again. Here is power absolutely superior to all circumstances. There is power superior to every enemy. No one can seize His sheep out of His hand. They have the blessedness of such power made good to them in life eternal, and they shall never perish.

Not only in the matter of power is this Shepherd good, but also in His perfect *devotion* to the welfare of His sheep. He laid down His life for them. To Nicodemus He spoke of His death as symbolized in the brazen serpent. It signified the judgment of all that man is in the flesh. This made possible the giving of a new nature to the believer.

As to those of faith before the Cross, God had in view the work to be accomplished there, and on this ground imparted divine life to them, even as in the case of Abraham and David (Rom. 3:25; 4:1-8). Since the Cross, the believer is still born of God, as were those

of old. But in another way there is a great difference. It lies not in some different divine work or kind of life, but in that now the believer is privileged to know the full place of sonship, fellowship with the Father and the Son. This is all connected with the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit, consequent upon Jesus being glorified. Such knowledge is derived from the revelation made by the Son when He came, and the after-unfolding of His things by the Spirit, as the Lord promised before returning to the Father.

The cross made possible this fulness of revelation. Until the lifting up of the Son of Man had been accomplished, God could not make known the riches of His grace. This began with the Son come into the world, but He speaks of being straitened until His baptism (that of the cross) was accomplished. From the beginning, then, the same blessed divine life belonged to the family of faith; but knowledge of God, apprehension of relationships, enjoyment of privileges, could only be according to the measure of revelation then given. Only with the coming of the Son could the perfect fulness be revealed, and the life be known as life eternal.

Returning to the subject of the Lord's death, in John 6 He presents it as the way by which

He becomes the source of life eternal to those who believe on Him, and its abiding sustenance. But as the Good Shepherd, His death is viewed as showing His perfect devotion to the welfare of the sheep. Preservation and constancy of care are the thoughts associated with it. Thus the laying down of His life is not only spoken of as the one distinctive and all-important act of the sacrifice at the cross, but as involving His powerful and abiding concern for His sheep. It pledges all His power and grace for their eternal blessing. Each one of the sheep can say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." The contrast is the hireling. But our Good Shepherd will not flee from any enemy, leaving the sheep to suffer. He not only gathers the flock, He abides with it. No enemy can seize and scatter; no one shall seize them out of His hand.

"He is able to save completely those who approach by Him to God, always living to intercede for them, for He, having once for all offered up Himself, continues forever according to the power of indissoluble life" (Heb. 7: 25, 27, 24, 16). He laid down His life *that*\* He might take it again (ver. 17). This brings in the power of resurrection, and the place He

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\* *ἵνα*. It expresses the object in view, the ultimate end, the aim.

fills in glory from whence He now exercises His power for His sheep. He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep brought again from among the dead, in the power of, or in virtue of, the blood of the eternal covenant (Heb. 13: 20). Our Shepherd has passed through the heavens, and sat down upon the throne of God.

The relation of the Good Shepherd to His sheep is further developed in the Lord's words, "I know those that are mine, and am known of those that are mine, as the Father knows Me and I know the Father." Here is a blessed state of knowledge subsisting between the Shepherd and His sheep which can only arise from community of life and nature, comparable in character to the knowledge and life subsisting between the Father and the Son. It is not a question of degree, but of nature. There is conformity in character. It is knowledge related to an established relationship existing between the knower and the known. It is not here the question of seeking and finding the lost, as in Luke 15: 1-7; it is rather what it means to be already laid "upon His own shoulders [the place of power], rejoicing." It is the blessedness of being *with* the Shepherd, so He speaks of intimacy in knowledge according to the life He came to give, and that abundantly.

Further details are given in vers. 27-30. The

sheep hear the Shepherd's voice. They can distinguish it from all others, for they know Him according to the power and blessing of an established relationship. They flee from a stranger, the voice of strangers they know not. He gives to His sheep an understanding so that they "know Him that is true." He has given us the unction whereby we know all things. Then, "I know them." His knowledge comprehends them all. They are the objects of His love, His care, His power. He is their Leader; they follow Him. Going before them, He leads in paths of righteousness, and brings into the Father's house. Where He is, the sheep must be also. "I give them life eternal." They have and enjoy this as following Him, for He ministers the blessedness of this life to His sheep in the path along which He leads them. "And they shall never perish."\* He maintains them in the life He gives, which is eternal. "And no one shall seize them out of my hand." There is no possible cessation of life, nor can any enemy prevail against the sheep of Christ. Nothing, and no one, can separate from Him. This necessarily connects with Him in resurrection, having taken His life again; made Head over all principality and power, having the power to subdue all things unto Himself.

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\* Lit., "And they in no wise shall perish forever."

Finally, there is the Father's relation to the Shepherd and the sheep. They are the Father's gift. He draws them to the Son, and gives all to Him. This does not end the Father's interest and care; He still guards them. "No one can seize out of the hand of My Father." He is greater than all. Their security is therefore assured by the Father's supremacy, and by the unity subsisting between the Father and the Son—"I and the Father are one . . . .the Father is in Me and I in Him." Then, the laying down of life by the Good Shepherd is referred to as a reason for the Father loving Him.

It gives intimation too that that love is also toward the sheep given to the Son since it was for them He laid down His life that He might take it again. Furthermore as this was according to the Father's commandment, He was accomplishing the Father's will for the full blessing of the sheep. How blessed is their place in such relations to the Father and the Son, objects with which their will, power, love, and continual interest are concerned, and secured in all according to what They are in Themselves!

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## 5.—“I am the Resurrection and the Life”

Both chaps. 11 and 12 of the Gospel throw light on this title, though it is intimately related to the raising of Lazarus. There is more of narration than of discourse in them, yet unequivocal testimony is given to the Person of the Lord, both as to His deity and the profoundly human side of His life.

The fact that He is man very clearly appears from the narrative. His humanity is emphasized not by formal statement, but by the circumstances recounted. The Lord journeys to Bethany with His disciples; Mary “fell at His feet;” “Jesus wept;” the Jews speak of Him as “this man;” He lifts up His eyes to heaven; He feasts with the family at Bethany; He rides into Jerusalem; He speaks of His death—these are things incident to being a man. He was deeply moved in *spirit* (11:33);\* and He Himself said, “Now is my *soul* troubled” (12:27). Here we have all that makes up full human nature, testifying to the fact that He of

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\* It is added, “and was troubled;” lit., “and troubled Himself.” This expression probably intimates the outward manifestation of His strong feeling, and an alternative rendering is “shuddered.” If this is so, it is another witness to the connection with and action of the *body*.

whom these things are spoken was truly man.

Since death came by man (Adam), by *Man* came also resurrection of those that are dead (1 Cor. 15: 21). That Man is Christ. Martha, we may say, speaks of resurrection rather as a doctrine, a current tenet; but the Lord states it as a fact identified with His own Person. He does not say, I raise the dead; or, I accomplish the resurrection, but, "*I am the Resurrection.*"

The deity of Jesus is also stated. Quoting from Isa. 6 the comment is, "These things said Esaias because he saw His glory and spoke of Him" (12: 40, 41). So the proper glory of Jesus is none other than that of Jehovah of Hosts as seen in the vision recorded by Isaiah. Martha confesses Him to be, "The Son of God, who should *come* into the world." This declares His pre-existence—He, a divine Person, God the Son, came into the world. She believed "that Jesus is the Christ," she confessed "that Jesus is the Son of God," and declared the truth of "Jesus Christ come in flesh" (1 John 5: 1; 4: 15, 2).

The great miracle here accomplished brings out "the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it" (11: 4, 40). The glory finds display in that Person by whose power death is annulled. That power is so manifested

at the grave of Lazarus, that the Lord can speak to Martha of seeing the glory of God. This involves the accomplishment of atonement; the redemption of the purchased possession; the removal of curse from God's creation, so that though now subject to vanity and groaning in the bondage of corruption, it shall be delivered and brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God; finally, God shall tabernacle with men, and, "They shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God. And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall not exist any more, nor grief, nor cry, nor distress shall exist any more, for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21: 3, 4).

The Lord had already spoken of resurrection as being effected by His voice, to which all that are in the graves must respond (John 5: 28, 29). That such power was His is confirmed by the raising up of dead persons during the course of His ministry. In due season His own resurrection also gave witness to it (John 2: 19-22; 10: 17, 18), and the hour is coming when it shall be finally manifested in the resurrection of just and unjust. But in the title of our Lord here considered it is not so much power in exercise as what He is Himself—"I am the Resurrection." This Divine Person come into

the world, is resurrection. It is not simply that such power is His, but He, the Person, is what resurrection is. He is the source, embodiment, or representation of it.

What is resurrection? It is victory over death. He who is this cannot be in any sense subject to death. He is "the living One." As man He became capable of dying, and indeed laid down His life, giving His flesh and His blood as the food and drink of life to all who believe on Him.

Death had no claim upon Him, He was not in any sense *subject* to it. In this perfection He stood alone. But He is really presenting Himself as the resurrection in connection with others, for He speaks at once of those who believe on Him.

Resurrection is viewed as an act of power—"I will raise him up at the last day;" as a state following physical death (Matt. 22:30; Lk. 20:35); and as a Person—the Son of God. He speaks of Himself as such, connecting it directly with those who believe. What He is in Himself can apply only to those who are in identification with Him by faith. As to others His power will be exercised, for He will bring forth all who are in death, but they come forth to judgment.

We may note that it is not resurrection in

a general sense, but specifically, "the Resurrection;" likewise, it is not life in any general sense, but "the Life." Both are connected with a special class—those who believe.

The glorious meaning of Him as the Resurrection could only be realized by them through His death. Apart from that He must abide alone, but if He die much fruit will result (12: 24). Through the death He suffered, the devil who has the might of death is annulled; and liberty is given to those who through fear of death were subject to bondage. He is, therefore, the resurrection to those who believe; for them He has ended death forever, and made nought of him who wielded its might. He has passed through death, and could not be holden by it. It is annulled for all who believe because they are identified with Him as the Firstborn from among the dead, and the Firstborn of many brethren who are to be conformed to His image.

He is whatever resurrection means for the believer, whether it be the power which sets death aside, the bodily condition which alone can inherit the kingdom of God, or the life itself in which old things have passed away and all things are new, all of God.

The Lord's resurrection is the proof of accomplished atonement, and of complete victory

(1 Cor. 15: 14-17, 56, 57). Through death such as He suffered all this could be realized by reason of who He was that took part in blood and flesh in order to accomplish these results in a manner which became God and fulfilled His will. Now to those who believe God gives the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Believers may now rejoice in knowing that the judgment of sin has been borne; that the dominion of sin is ended; that sin in the flesh has been condemned and removed from before God, and they are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit; that their sins and iniquities are remembered no more; that the sting of death has been removed; and that they shall be changed to conform to the Firstfruits of the resurrection-harvest—Christ risen from among the dead (1 Cor. 15: 20).

*"I am the Resurrection."* Being this, though He die, it can only be to rise out of it in triumph. This is the indisputable demonstration of His superiority to all that Satan had brought in through man—even sin and death by sin. By his lie Satan led man to do what would cause death to fall upon him. Sin makes death a mighty enemy to man. Satan wields this might of death, and by death shows that he has triumphed over man, for God had not created man for death but for life. With it

came that fear which broods over all nature when death approaches, but it is most dreadful to man because of sin. That is indeed its sting—its might, and under Satan's leadership and power man is the slave and servant of sin. But now there is another Man to whom personally attaches all that resurrection signifies. *He* through death has completely triumphed over sin and the devil. God has thus made manifest His purpose and grace, according to which we are saved, "By the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has annulled death, and brought to light life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings" (2 Tim. 1: 9, 10).

It follows that the believer on Jesus, "though he have died,\* shall live." It is certain that he will be raised from among the dead. "For if we are become identified with Him in the likeness of His death, so also we shall be of His resurrection" (Rom. 6: 5). To believe establishes the identification. It being with Him who is the resurrection, then what He is in Himself in this connection, must find its manifestation in those who believe. As Head of a new race He, the Last Adam, will communicate the power of what He is as the resurrection to

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\* The aorist denotes *an event*, not a condition (*Vincent*).

## 6.—“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”

This title the Lord takes in circumstances quite different from those we have been considering. He was now alone with His disciples on the eve of His departure. With the world shut out, and shut in with His own, His words are especially for them.

The announcement that He would leave them was a heavy burden to the hearts of His disciples. They could hardly understand its expediency while the thought of His absence brought sorrow. They felt lost, as in a maze, uncertainty beclouded their minds, anxiety assailed them. What would the future be? To their exercises the Lord gives His answer in these chapters of the Gospel (13-17).

“Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe on God, believe also on Me.” He presents Himself as an object of faith even as God also was. In this He places Himself on an equality with God. They were losing Christ on earth, but were to believe on Him just as they believed on God, though not having seen Him at any time. Thus all resolved itself into a question of the Person whom they believed. He, then,



is the embodiment of all for them, so that He can say, "Ye know where I go, and ye know the way." Is it the Father's house? Is it the prepared place? Is it the coming again? All that these things mean are comprised in Him. Their knowledge of "where" consisted in knowing Him, for He concretely expressed the character of the place and all found there. Their knowledge of "the way" also consisted in knowing Him. It is not the way in the sense of a path, but the means of realization, that by which all is accomplished. He desired them to understand that they *knew* both the place and the way since they knew Him. Having this knowledge, even though He was away, they could enjoy by anticipation the glorious future of which He had spoken. Its fulness would be entered when He came to receive them to Himself.

Thomas seems to think only of locality and the path thither. This is not the Lord's viewpoint, and in His answer He diverts their minds from anything like a geographical idea, or physical form, to Himself as the Person in whom all is revealed and possessed. This is necessary since He calls upon them to believe on Him in the same manner as they believed on God. *He* is to be the object of their faith.

In these studies we have learned that our

blessed Lord is the Bread of life, the Light of life, the Door into life, the Power to preserve life, the Character of the life, and here He is the Object of the life—life which is received by faith, lived on that principle; and he who has it shall never see death, lives for ever, has eternal life. Of this life He is the embodiment, so that what characterizes it is the knowledge of Himself in whom the Father is perfectly revealed.

“I am the Way.” “No one comes to the Father unless by Me.” Christ is the only possible way to reach the Father. “No one knows . . . the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal Him” (Matt. 11:27). To reach a place or person we must know the way. When the Father is in question access is by the Son. How is He the way? In one respect, as the coming One, for as such He will bring us to the Father in His house. He alone is the means by which that end is reached. But we, such as we, must be made fit for that end. Hence, whatever is required to accomplish this fitness enters into what it means for Him to be “the Way.” It necessitated the cross, so that we might have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins; and be presented holy, unblamable, and irreproachable, even “set with exultation blameless before

His [God's] glory." As now knowing the Son by believing on Him we have present enjoyment of these blessings, and enter into the intent or scope of eternal life—the knowledge of the Father, the only true God, and the Person sent by Him, Jesus Christ (John 17:3).

"I am . . . the Truth." He came into the world to bear witness of the truth (John 19:37), and He could declare that He had told them the truth. He is whatever the truth is. All that is eternal fact and spiritual reality meet in Him. The truth subsists, or came into being through Him (John 1:17). That is, there came into manifestation with Him as come into the world that which in the full sense is the truth. Previously there had been only the shadow, but Christ was the substance, the reality. At best, the law with its ordinances and ceremonies was "a shadow of things to come; but the body [what is concrete, the substance] is of Christ" (Col. 2:17). So it follows, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten One, who is in the bosom of the Father, *He* (strongly emphatic) hath declared Him." Jesus is the manifestation and interpretation of the Father. He gave the interpretation and explanation of God in words which were spirit and life. And what He said that He Himself was. The spoken message and the Person were

one. That which He declared was the truth. He embodied it, and therefore to receive the truth as He gave it meant to know Him, since it was the expression of Himself. This also meant to know His Father for They were one. So He imperatively states, "Ye know Him, and have seen Him."

Philip seems to catch at the word "seen," and makes his request, "Show us the Father and it suffices us." Knowledge is connected with the truth being revealed, but seeing conveyed the thought of an object presented for observation and contemplation. This prompted Philip's request. Philip judged he had not seen the Father after this fashion, and to do so he felt would fully satisfy.

The Lord's answer illuminates the meaning of His declaration, "I am...the Life." "Am I so long a time with you, and thou hast not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Show us the Father?" Here the knowing of Jesus is connected with what Philip had seen, not simply heard. Philip had seen the life the Lord lived, and enjoyed personal acquaintance with Him in it. Now to see the Father could only mean to observe Him in life, to have Him shown as the living Father. They had seen the Son living among them, and in this they

had also seen the Father, for the Father was in Him and He in the Father. Words and works bore witness to this. He could say, "I am the Life." But what life?

The opening verses of John's first Epistle may help us to understand the force of this statement. The apostolic report gave what they had heard, seen, contemplated and handled concerning "the Word of the life" (literal). There are the two things—"the Word," "the life," the latter being what characterizes the Person who is the Word. The connection with John 1:1, 4 seems obvious: "In the beginning was the Word...in Him was life." John, however, refers to this in a special aspect, and not merely in the general sense that He is the source of all life. Therefore, He at once goes on to say, "And the life has been manifested, and we have seen...the life, the eternal (literal), which\* was with the Father." "With" is *pros*, the preposition of motion with the accusative case, used here as frequently in the New Testament in the sense of with, not merely as *being near or beside*, but as expressing living

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\* The compound pronoun, ἡ<sup>τις</sup>, used explicatively. It properly indicates the *class* or *kind* to which an object belongs. It has a qualitative force, and so here denotes the *quality* of the life; *seeing that* it was with the Father, that is, divine in its nature and timeless in character—eternal.

normal and constant characteristic of those who live. "He who eats Me shall live also on account of Me." It is constant appropriation by faith.

How fitting that with this, the last of His "I am's," the Lord should so definitely assert His all-sufficiency for His people. This is well expressed by the figure of the Vine and its branches. Any branch is worthless except it be in vital connection with the stem and root from whence the vine-life flows.

Fruit and life are relative terms. Fruit is found because there is life. Life is there because fruit is found. So it is life or death as correlative to fruitfulness or fruitlessness.

The Lord says, "I am the *true* Vine." Life dwells in and flows from Him. He is the root, the source of it. This precludes all other means of producing fruit for God. That which is born of flesh cannot do it, man in the flesh cannot please God. Israel in particular, under the symbol of the vine, had proved fruitless. Jesus alone is the Fruit-bearer. He takes the place of all who have failed. It follows that only through vital connection with Him can there be fruit-bearing branches.

Throughout these chapters of John's Gospel (13-17) the Lord has in view the life and blessing of His people while they are still in the

world and He is with the Father, the Holy Spirit being with and in them. He makes known the principles which are to govern them—dependence and obedience—and shows that His desire for them is the practical realization of all that was His portion when here as man living by, for, and with the Father. At the same time He leaves them in no doubt as to future blessing and glory with Himself. What this comprises, its amazing wealth of blessing, privilege, relationship and prerogative, can only be given here in barest outline. May even this serve to awaken our longing and deepen our love. The Lord presents these things in the following relations.

As to works and having access to the Father (14: 12-14) ;

As being one in the fellowship of mutual life (14: 19, 20) ;

As being in the Father's love (14: 21, 23; 17: 23) ;

As being in peace, that of the Son (14: 27) ;

As being always heard and bearing fruit (15: 7, 8, 16) ;

As being in His love (15: 9, 10) ;

As being in His joy (15: 11) ;

As being in His knowledge of all the things heard by Him from the Father (15: 15) ;

daily living in dependence and obedience as those who draw only from Him. Thus it is that He is in us. This is similar to His previous statement: "He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood dwells in Me and I in him" (6:56). "Dwells" is the same word as abide. From this we may glean what abiding in Him means. It is appropriation by faith which is illustrated by eating. So He says, "He also who eats Me shall live also on account of Me." Thus the branch is living and becomes fruitful.

He says, "I am the Vine." Not now the true Vine in contrast to any other, but *the* Vine; there is no other. He is the sole source of life and fruit. All sufficiency is found absolutely alone in Him. Hence, "He that abides in Me, and I in him, *he* bears much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing." On the other hand, "Unless any one abide in Me he is cast out as the branch, and is dried up; and they gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned." This is perishing. Can it apply to a believer? "My sheep...shall never perish." "Him that comes to Me I will not at all cast out" (6:37). One who does not abide in Christ is not a Christian. One who is a Christian does in some true sense abide, but what the Lord speaks of here is constancy of appropriation by faith in realized dependence,



so that we have Him in us, our entire sufficiency for all.

As already mentioned there is another principle of importance—obedience. "If ye abide in Me" expresses the maintained sense of dependence: "And My words abide in you," that is obedience. This is the proof of love to which both the Son and the Father respond most blessedly (14: 21-24). As a result of obedience there is realized power. Those indwelling words of spirit and life so form and control the believer that his thoughts run with God's thoughts and his requests accord with the divine mind. Then what is asked comes to pass. This must search our hearts since we often ask and it does not come to pass. There is an asking amiss because we fail in exercising such dependence and obedience as leads us to know the will of God. How different with Jesus who was always heard! We are called to follow His example, so shall we be His disciples, and share in the blessed communion He constantly enjoyed.

Two precious and holy prerogatives attach to the obedience of which the Lord speaks. First, His love—love which is as that of the Father for Him. But to abide in it, to dwell in it as the atmosphere which envelops our lives, we must keep His commandments, ac-

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